THE

Supream Authority

UNDER GOD

OF THE

COMMON-WEALTH

Of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*,

THE

COMMONS in PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The true and faithfull Testimony of *William Morris*, a late Member of the Army in *IRELAND*.

When the wicked rise, men hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous increase.

The fear of the Lord prolongeth dayes: but the years of the wicked shall be shortned.

The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall

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UMI

To the Supream authority (under God) of the Common-Wealth of England, Scotland, *and* Ireland, *the Commons assembled in Parliament.*

He Lord *Almighty*, whose Name is *Holy*, whose *power* no creature is able to resist, hath heard the *cry* of the afflicted, and the cruelly oppressed *Innocent*, for his names sake he hath beheld, and hath not ceased *turning* and *overturning* persons and powers, until he hath once more *returned* the desperate forlorn and sinking concernments of all the Godly in the Nations, into your bosoms, their tossed, tumbled, torn and tottering interest is once more imported into your harbour.

And indeed the revival of your prestine Authority begins to appear like the resurrection of the *just*, before whom all the contrary is and must be judged and condemned; and this is seen and felt even by outward observation already in *Ireland*; O how do the scandalous and persecuting *Magistrates*, the greedy *hirelings*, and *blind-guides*, the prophane and bloodthirsty *people*, even all the curled bryars, thorns, and brambles of all sorts, which of late have sprung up and flourished under the shadow of *Henry Cromwell* these four years by-past in this Nation now begin to droop, to hang the head and wither, as if their end (which is to be burnt) were near at hand.

And now that the *Lord* hath once more put a price into your hands, and given you another precious opportunity, wherby you may be more serviceable then ever to the interest of his beloved *Son*, who is come forth a *light* into the World, and after a long and dark night of *Apostacie* hath arisen and is arising and coming in thousands of his *saints* (as it is written of him) who are gathered, gathering and to be gathered in this the day of his glorious appearance out of the *Egyptian* bondage of the mercenary *hirelings*, and soul-starving *pastors*,

out of all opinions, forms, and practises professing or prophane, *into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, and into the unity of the eternal spirit, that therein they might have fellowship with the Father, and the Son.*

Beware that you turn not the edge of your authority against his *Royal seed*, who saith, touch not mine *annointed*, and do my *Prophets* no harm, yea, those that touch them, touch the apple of his own eye; and Kings hath he rebuked for their sakes, and brought down the mighty before them, And as in former ages and Generations, so in this present hath his *mighty arm* been stretched out, whereby he hath wrought deliverance for his *chosen* and redeemed his *heritage*, and the loftinesse of man hath he bowed down, who took pleasure in unrighteousnesse, in transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing from the way of God; fasting for strife and debate, and that they might smite with the fist of wickednesse, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of deceit and falshood, yet covering all over with pretence of *reformation* and *settlement*, until *judgement* was turned away backward, *justice* stood afar off, *truth* was fallen in the streets, and *equity* could not enter, for the *wicked* were set in high places, the *proud* were called happie, the greedy *birelings* and soul devouring *blind guides*, the plundering parish Priests exalted against the Lord and against his truth, and upheld in their *false Doctrines* and *cruel oppressions* by a Law.

And he that reproved in the gate was *hated*, and he that spake uprightly was *abhorred*, and he that departed from iniquity was made a *prey*, and many of the faithful in the Nations for their Testimony against the crying *abominations* of the times, and for *tender conscience sake* towards God, were thrust into *prisons*, holes, and corners, and otherwise *persecuted*, and cruelly intreated (and this was the *true state of the case*) until the oppression of the *innocent*, and the cry of *iniquity* was exceeding great, and the Lord harkened and heard it, and looking down from the habitation of his holinesse and his glory, he saw it, and it greatly displeased him; and his zeal, and his strength, and the sounding of his bowels, and his mercies towards them were not restrained; and after long waiting, and often *warning* (and things growing worse and

worse)

worse) at last his wrath break forth and there was no remedy, and his purpose he established, and his decree was sealed; that although that Ruler had been as the Signet upon his right hand, yet would he pluck him off, and rend the government from him and from his house (as formerly he did the government of his people from *Saul* when he departed from him) and so by his own right Arm made way for you by overturning him, that neither Argument nor Arts nor Arms could overcome.

And now seeing it is not by your might, nor by your power, but by the wonder-working hand of God alone you are restored; Be you warned from the *Lord God Almighty*, that you take heed of drinking in the *murderous*, *Cain*-like spirit of the greedy and *mercenary hirelings*, who teach for *hire* and Divine for sums of mony, tythes and other customes (established by the *Pope*) whose God is their *belly*, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things, who sacrifice the Lord *abhorreth*, and it is an abomination to him.

I say take heed of drinking in that spirit, for it is the wine of fornication which they will be presenting to you in a golden cup of glorious and shining pretences to external holiness, formality, and lip Religion; but it is the cup of the Whores *abomination*, wherewith the Princes and Rulers of the earth, earth have been made drunk in all ages to this very day, by that persecuting generation, who have made themselves even drunk with the blood, and rich with the spoil of Saints.

And *as ever you expect the presence of the Lord with you, or his blessing upon your Government*, beware that ye neither do nor cause nor consent to any act of cruelty against any sort of people in the Nations who have hungering and breathing desires after the clearest and most manifest enjoyments of Jesus Christ, and who are come to see the deceit of the *hirelings* and blind guides, and for *tender conscience* sake cannot pay towards their maintainance; And especially the Lords most tenderly affected and beloved *friends*, the seed of faithful *Abraham* according to the spirit, who greatly fear and tremble at his powerful word, and are by the scorners of this generation called *Quakers*; but know you this assuredly, that amongst those people, your greatest and most powerful interest truly stands, and upon your well or evil dealing with them, your welfare, or your ruine doth undoubtedly depend: for the Tabernacle of the Lord of hosts is with them, the

Kingdom of his Son is exalted in them, [illegible] power and glory is manifested to them, the shout of a mighty King is among them, and all their enemies shall fall before them.

Wherefore beware you undertake not to defend the hirelings in their opinions imaginations, or practices, touching the worship of God, by your authority, from the examinations, and tryals of others who are or may be moved of the Lord to try their spirits and Doctrins, for the true worshipers of the true God did never appeal to any Humane Authority to defend them in their worship from the words of gain-sayers, nor never will; but were alwayes ready by *sound Doctrines* (nor by prisons, stocking and whipping) to exhort, convince and silence such as did oppose themselves.

And herein the late *Tyranical and conscience-oppressing* Rulers have much exceeded the cruelty of the *Jewes*; for although the Ministers of Christ (whose manner it was to go into the Synagogues on the Sabbath dayes, and reason from the Scriptures, perswading the things concerning the Kingdom of God (as his Ministers do in these days) were sometimes haled out and beaten, and brought before Rulers, who in their wills put them in prison, sometimes a day or two or three, and then let them depart; yet we never read that the chief Authority or Rulers either of the *Jewes* or *Romans* did ever so much aggravate their sin or harden themselves against the Lord and against his truth, as to make a Law to defend their teachers from the words of Christs Disciples, either within or without the Synagogues; but this Apostatizing and unbelieving generation have by a *cruelly exacting Law*, upon pain of long imprisonment, fines and grievous punishments of the body, attempted to defend their publique hirelings and soul-devouring teachers, from the words of Christs Ministers, who are sent of him to try their spirits and manifest their deceit; and that neither in their publike places, nor in their going or returning to nor from them, the hireling must be spoken to.

O high presumption against the Lord! as if they intended to limit and circumscribe the spirit and power of the holy One within the bounds of their Arbitrary dictates! as if their Lawes could prevent the wind from blowing, or their commands with hold the day from breaking, or their decrees obscure the [illegible] from

shining, or their power, wisdom and strength of the Camp shall not be overwhelmed in the vain attempt.

Beware also that you compell not any by your Lawes to pay their tythes or other considerations towards the maintenance of the common hirelings, who do deny them and their Doctrines; but if any sort of people in the Nations will voluntarily make choice such to be their leaders, it is but just, upon grounds of common equitie, that, those who follow blind guides at their own peril, should also maintain them at their own charges.

And so break ye the bonds of the late oppressing taskmasters; and let at liberty those who for several years, by past have suffered cruel bondage besides the spoiling of their goods: and have not loved their lives unto the death, but given up all for conscience sake rather then betray their testimony, and deny the second Priesthood, *Christ Jesus the everlasting high-Priest*. (who was not made by the Law of a carnal commandment, but by the power of an endless life:) by whose coming the first Priesthood that took Tythes was changed, and the Law that gave Tythe (as well as that which required sacrifice of burnt-offerings) abolished as *Heb.7.* nor can they give any part of the creatures whereof the Lord hath made them Stewards, towards the maintaining and upholding such a Minister, which Christ hath never sent.

And think it not sufficient that the Saints have liberty to dissent from and deny the false and will worship of the common hirelings, and yet must be compelled by Law to give them maintennance, or suffer spoiling; for it were as high iniquitie in the sight of God, to cause the Saints to suffer because they cannot give their goods as sacrifice to the idol, as to cause them suffer because they cannot bow and worship: and it were no less cruelty to binde them to the one, then to the other.

And therefore as ever you would be found innocent before the Lord, and have the work of God to prosper in your hands, or you be prosperous in your undertakings, *forbear imposing tythes upon any people in the Nations against their consciences or any other Taxes upon his faithful ones towards the maintenance of the hired teachers*.

For this I have received of the Lord, and it is my faithful Testimony to you in the eternal word of truth that shall stand for ever,

1. *That no true Ministers of the true Christ did ever yet take tythes for Preaching, nor never will.*

2. That

2. *That no true Ministers of the true Christ did ever yet demand or crave a setled maintenance from the chief Authority of any Nation for Preaching, nor never will.*

3. *That no true Ministers of the true Christ did ever yet accept of (unchiefly compell) a setled maintenance for Preaching, from such as did deny them and their Doctrine, nor never will.*

4. *That no true Ministers of the true Christ did ever yet petition the authority of any Nation to be defended in their doctrines or practices concerning the worship of God by a Humane Law from the gainsaying of others, nor never will.*

5. *That no true Ministers of the true Christ did ever cause men or women to be persecuted, imprisoned, stocked and shamefully entreated, for speaking to them in their meetings, or asking them questions, nor never will.*

And therefore if any sort of people whatsoever they are called, (whether *Presbyterians, Independants, Baptists*, or *Quakers*) do come unto you and tell you they are Ministers of Christ, and demand of you a setled maintenance for *Gospel Preaching*; I do affirm from the Lord, they are to be denyed as false witnesses, and no true Ministers of the true Christ.

For those who are truely sent of him, they neither come to the powers of the earth for maintenance nor a probation; but do approve themselves to that of God in every conscience, and the Gospel doth maintain them.

They covet no mans gold nor silver nor raiment, but freely as they have received of the Lord they freely give, & unto such Christ saith, He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me; And when they come to a City or a Town, enquire who is worthy and there abide and eat such things as are set before them, for the work-man is worthy of his meat; and if any do deny them and their doctrine, shake off the dust off their feet as a witness against them; Christ further tels them, he sends them forth as Lambs amongst wolves; and that they shall be brought before Rulers, and delivered up to Councels, and scourged in the Synagogues, and persecuted from City to City, and delivered into prisons, and betrayed by brethren and kinsfolk, and friends, and hated of all men for his names sake; and these are true Characters of such as are true Ministers of the true Christ.

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But such as run [illegible] *Wolves among Lambs*, roaring, [illegible] and devouring [illegible] as do not readily put into their mouthes; and such were the false Prophets of old, against whom the true Prophets bore their Testimony, such were they that conspired in the midst of *Israel*, like a *Roaring Lyon* ravening the prey and devouring soule, taking the treasure and the pretious things, & prophaning the holy things of the Lord, putting no difference between the holy and prophane nor between the unclean and the clean; such were they that eat the fat, and cloathed themselves with the wool, & killed them that were fed, but fed not the flock; Such were they that did seek for *hire* and divine for *money*: Such were they that the Lord by his prophets calls *Greedy dogs*, that can never have enough, which all look to their own wales, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Ezek. 22, 25. Micha 3. 11. Isa. 56. 11.

And doth not the Nations abound with such at this day, which run and are not sent of *Christ*? *O what Legions of these devouring Locusts have spread themselves upon the earth*! and what swarmes of them hath the *East winds* brought into this poor wasted countrie of *Ireland*? as if all the *Cages* of unclean and hatefull birds in the Nations had been set open, or *Lucifer* with his Regiments of unclean spirits intended to set up his kingdome in the midst of us. And these having obtained approbation and commission from the powers of the earth, and *Tythes* established by a humane Law, and *treble dammage* the penalty of such as do (for conscience sake or otherwise) refuse to pay; Then forth they go like *evening wolves*, (the greediest of all dogs, ravening after their prey; And then their first enquirie is, not where's the best people but) where's the best benefice? Where's the parrish that will yeeld most profit? Where's the quarter that will yeeld most gain? &c. And when he hath found out the best he can, then that shall satisfie, because he can get no better; and when he comes to the place, his next enquirie is (not as the Ministers of *Christ*, (who is worthy, or who is godly, but rather) who is wicked who is the most malitious spiteful man amongst his neighbours, or the most cunning knave in all the parish, that he may make him his Proctor (for no honest man will meddle with such an employment) and such an one must be employed to make a strict enquiry into mens estates, what quantity of corne they have, what *wheat*,

Oxen, Peas, Beans they have, what Parsnips, Carrets, Onyons, Leeks, Potatoes, they have, what Corns, Calves and Sheep, and Lambs, & how many Piggs, and Ducks and Geese, and Hens, they have, least a tythe Chickin should escape his greedy Chops. Are these ministers of Christ? And if any of the servants of Christ happen to be within his quarter, who for conscience sake cannot put into his ravenous mouth, then theres a *prize* for him; and if they have considerable outward estates, (thats the fish he angles for) they are the people he looks for; Then never was cursed Cavileer more eager to plunder a *Round-heads* house in time of warr, then this greedy hireling is to plunder these *Quakers* (as he calls them) And then another or two he must procure to go & view their substance and value it at the highest rate; and next teacheth them to break *Christs* command, and to swear for him; and thus having sufficiently instructed them in wickedness, and made them sevenfold more the children of Hell then they were before, to the evil Magistrates they go, and there after swearing and forswearing he gets a judgement for treble dammage, and so having got a commission to plunder, he then makes havock; and what ever he finds of outward substance alive or dead thats movable, he sweeps away, not leaving either food to eate or cloathes to cover either old or young, and then casts into prison the bodies of such as they had thus spoiled, and there cause them to be kept until they finished their testimonies with their lives.

O! How many examples of this kind of *lingring Martyrdome* hath there been in several places; as may appear in the records of sufferings for tythes in *England*?

And these and such like are the true characters of the *false Prophets* and Ministers of *Anti-christ*, and such is the ministry of these Nations at this day, who *murther* and *martyr* for their greedy bellies.

And thus the land is defiled with blood, yea the blood of the *Innocent* cries to the Lord for vengeance, against unrighteous Lawes, unjust and cruel Judges, and above all against the blood-sucking hirelings, and their upholders, against whom the controversie of the Lord is exceeding great, and when the measure of their iniquity is filled, and the sufferings of his saints accomplished then shall the vials of his wrath, and the wine of his indignation be poured out without mixture, and they shall surely drink it, who have drunk up the blood of the innocent, and have had no pity.

And

And forasmuch as divers of you have suffered *affliction* under the late *oppressing Government*, (and with other Noble and publique spirited persons in the Nation) have been made the stock-stool whereby *ambition and usurpation* might enthrone it selfe; and arbytrary will and power kept you under bonds, while the plowers made long furrows upon your backs, because of the testimony you bore against the growing iniquities of those evil times; and now that the Lord hath given you *liberty*, and put the *power* of doing good into your hands; Remember ye the *afflictions* of every *Joseph*, and as feeling members of the miseries of others (who for the exercise of a good conscience towards God) have been left *forelorne and fatherlesse* in the Nations, forsaken of the Magistrates generally; all acts of *Justice mercy and pity* being denyed to many of them from men of all estates, even from him that Swaied the *Scepter* to him that held the plough, and they given up and exposed as a prey to the lust and spoil of any that would oppresse them) let your bowels be enlarged, relieve yee the oppressed, help the helplesse, Judge the cause of the *fatherlesse*, for herein you judge not for man, but for the Lord, who hath reserved you to stand in the gap in such a day as this is, and not to make it wider. And amongst the flock (whereof Christ Jesus is the true shepherd) of which you are to have regard in *England*, let not the tender Lambes, who (in regard of outward habitation) are scattered here and there in this Nation, be forgotten by you; but speedily extend the power God hath put into your hands, to save them out of the mouthes of the devouring *Wolves*, *the insatiable hirelings*, who are gaping ready to swallow up the heritage of the Lord: And those who have been faithful to the interest of the Nations, and with their lives and all that was deare unto them, waded through hazards and hardships in times of difficulty, and danger for the promoting *the good old cause*, the advancement of *Justice*, *Righteousnesse and truth in the earth*; have lately been insulted and Tyrannized over by the greedy *hirelings*, who wait to make a prey upon us; And because for conscience sake we cannot pay them Tythes, the *hireling*, in whose *quarter* any of us falls to be, seemes to rejoyce that he hath such a *prize* in hand, and glories in the Law that gives him *Treble damage*, that by colour thereof he might (according to the example of his brethren in *England*) Sweep away all in a day, and inrich himselfe with the spoil of the *Innocent*. O how he longes for harvest, and boasteth what he will do if Tythes be

of this, and (who had been faithful teachers, zealous and constant in their profession many years) which your own eyes have seen, even ready to be devoured, our goods spoiled, our houses made wilderness, and our children fatherless by long imprisonments and lingring *martyrdome* (an evill reward for our good service) which several of our dear brethren in *England* have lately undergone, who never the lesse have finished their courses with joy, and through many tribulations have passed into everlasting rest; Although their wives and many innocent babes are left behind, surviving monuments of their oppressors cruelties.

And that it purely is for *conscience sake* towards God we pay not tythes, you need no other evidence to convince your then thirsty *bloody characters* wherein the truth hereof hath been so legibly written in these few years, by so many servants of the living God in several prisons in *England* whose testimonies were sealed with their lives; besides the sufferings of hundreds more, (both here and there) who have suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing where they have a better and more enduring substance.

Wherefore if that precious spirit of zeal towards God, of righteousnesse and justice towards men, of love and meeknesse towards tender consciences, which formerly was manifest among you be not departed from you, then let it now appear and act for God, that truth and righteousnesse (the sum and substance of all our hopes and expectations) may be established in the earth, and oppression, tyranny and injustice (the cause of all our sufferings) be removed, that tender consciences may be relieved, the kingdome of our Lord Christ exalted, and, then generations yet unborn shall call you blessed.

But if a contrary spirit rise and guide you, and you let slip this precious opportunity, and suffer *Sion* still to languish in the dust, spreading out her hands and there be none will help her, the Lord will send deliverance another way, and innocent blood will be required at your hand and your names be numbred among those that the Lord hath [illegible] before you.

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